



THE AIR UNIVERSITY



A REVITALIZED USAF CULTURE OF INNOVATION

SOS CLASS 14A
THINK TANK



Airmen Must Understand that Innovation is their Job





Research Questions



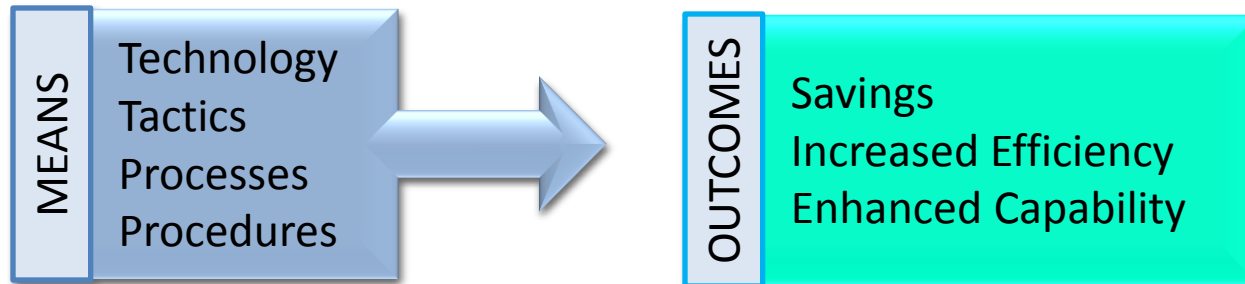
- How does the AF foster an environment where innovation is encouraged on a daily basis at the lowest level?
- What barriers currently exist? How can the AF overcome them?
- What does the CSAF's mandate, "if it doesn't make sense, don't do it" mean? How can this be applied at the lowest level?



Tailoring Our Focus



- Innovation is a broad concept that means different things to different people
- Our interpretation: *Innovation Through Idea Development*





Defining Innovation



The process within the Air Force of developing, implementing, and sustaining new technology, tactics, processes, or procedures in order to save money, increase efficiency, or expand capability.



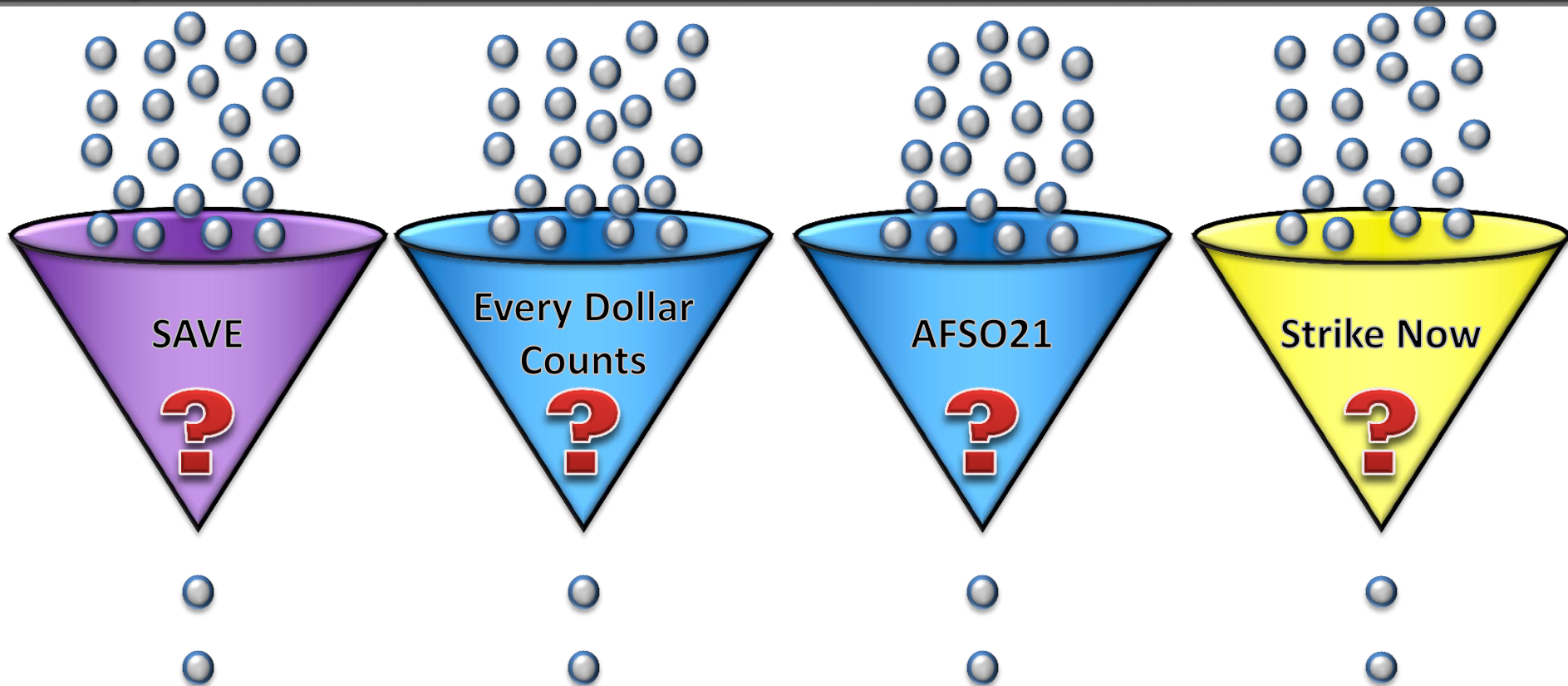
Evaluating the Landscape: Barriers to Innovation



- No single focal point of entry for idea development
- Inadequate advertising campaigns for current programs
- Inconsistent grassroots incentives
- Bureaucratic complexity



No Single Focal Point of Entry for Idea Development





Inadequate Advertising Campaigns



- Promising innovation programs exist but not effectively advertised
- Programs operate independently which creates a “silo effect”
 - Every Dollar Counts: AF Portal and AF-wide emails
 - AFSO21: Wing-wide emails and base newspapers
 - Airmen often lack knowledge of available programs



Inconsistent Grassroots Incentives



- Perceived culture of risk aversion
 - Current financial and manpower constraints de-incentivize Airmen to seek out new ways of completing the mission
 - Failure considered “too costly” in a resource-constrained environment
- Creative risk-taking should be encouraged
 - Chain of command obstacles



Bureaucratic Complexity



- CSAF charge: “If it doesn’t make sense, don’t do it”
- Airmen not empowered to answer this charge
 - If AF regulations and/or leaders mandate the requirement, Airmen must still “do it”
 - Updates to regulations may take years
- Real or perceived resistance to change
- Status quo will usually win out



Forward Momentum: Innovation Office (IO)



- Create wing-level “Innovation Office” as focal point
 - Integrate AFSO21 and Innovation “Think Tanks” into wing ops
 - Coordinate marketing of AF programs and industry cooperation
 - Manage and monitor Innovation Sabbatical Program at the wing level
- Supported by HAF Innovation Center and MAJCOM Innovation Facilitators
- Zero-based manning concept



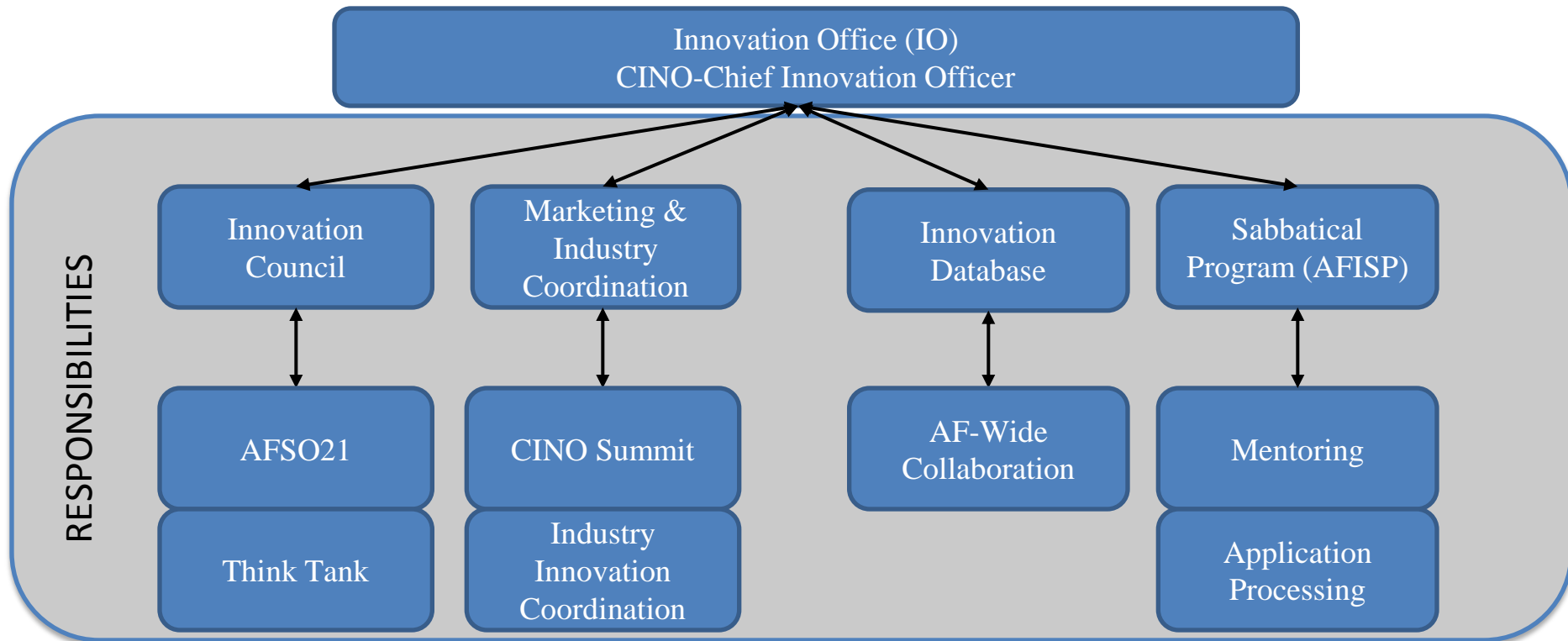
Chief Innovation Officer (CINO)



- O-6 Command Selection Board eligible (senior O-5)
- Board selected (or by-name request)
- Desired qualifications
 - Graduated Sq/CC
 - Education With Industry (EWI) graduate (or similar)
- Intent: CINO coveted in same manner as Chief of Wing Safety



The Innovation Office Concept





Innovation Council



- Squadron Innovation Representatives
 - CGOs/NCOs appointed by Sq/CCs in coordination with CINO
 - Facilitate and develop ideas from within unit
- Responsible for facilitating AFSO21 and “Think Tanks” in wing
 - AFSO21 = Process Improvement (“Improving the Known”)
 - “Think Tanks” = New Process Formulation (“Identifying the Unknown”)



Marketing and Industry Coordination



- Synchronize advertising efforts
 - Results from innovation programs briefed at Commanders' calls
 - Frequent interaction between Innovation Office and Wing organizations
- Foster positive relationships with local businesses and identify ways to dovetail AF/corporate interests
- Attend/promote innovation councils and summits (AF and corporate sector)



Innovation Database



- Wing Innovation Office monitors AF-established Innovation Database
 - Inputs best practices from AFSO21 and “Think Tank” events
 - Regularly searches database and shares AF-wide inputs with wing units
- Current examples
 - Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) and online military collaboration tools (e.g. milSuite and milBook)



AF Innovation Sabbatical Program



- Inspired by Navy Career Intermission Pilot Program (CIPP)
- 1-3 month extension at current duty station
 - Allows AF personnel to research IO-approved ideas for process improvement
 - Regular check-ins with IO advisor and mentor at AFIT (technical ideas) or AU (non-technical ideas)



Creating Innovators Through Education



- Expand current EWI program
 - Include all AFSCs (Officer and Enlisted)
 - Enhance diversity of companies
 - Capture ROI by employing graduates within Innovation Offices
- Create a Air Force School of Innovation Studies (AFSIS) modeled after SAASS



Grassroots Incentives



- Ways to incentivize innovation: \$\$\$, time off, or increased promotion
 - Financial and manpower constraints = “the new normal”
 - Performance reports and awards provide an optimal solution
 - Add block for “innovative contributions” within OPRs/EPRs
 - Require innovation bullets within existing award programs
 - Create a HAF-level “John R. Boyd Innovation Award” program with MAJCOM/Wing equivalents



Top-Down Innovation Focus



- Percentage of “savings” returned to Wing Commanders at FY end
 - Benchmark: Commander-In-Chief’s Installation Excellence Program
 - Savings authorized for use on Wing QoL Improvement Initiatives
 - Provide alternative to informal Wing Commander “reserve accounts”
- New AF “Flash Rewrite” process to expedite limited reg updates
 - Expedites high priority rewrites of AF publications/instructions by creating direct channel to approval authority



Conclusion

Barriers to Innovation

No Single Focal Point of Entry for Idea Development

Inadequate Advertising

Inconsistent Grassroots Incentives

Bureaucratic Complexity

Airmen Must Understand that Innovation is their Job

- 21 events
- & Industry Coordination
- Innovation Database
- Innovation Sabbaticals
- AFSIS & Expanded EWI/IDE
- Grassroots & Top-Down Incentives
- Expedited Regulation Updates

Wing Innovation Office

USAF Innovation Center



Backup Slides



Education with Industry (EWI)



- Purpose: On-the-job education, experience, and exposure to private sectors of the economy or other government agencies
- Scope: 10-month SAF/AQ-sponsored, corporate partnerships with US defense and non-defense related industry leaders
- Eligibility: 5-7 year Captains (primarily reserved for 6 series AFSCs)
- Supervised by AFIT Civilian Institution Programs office



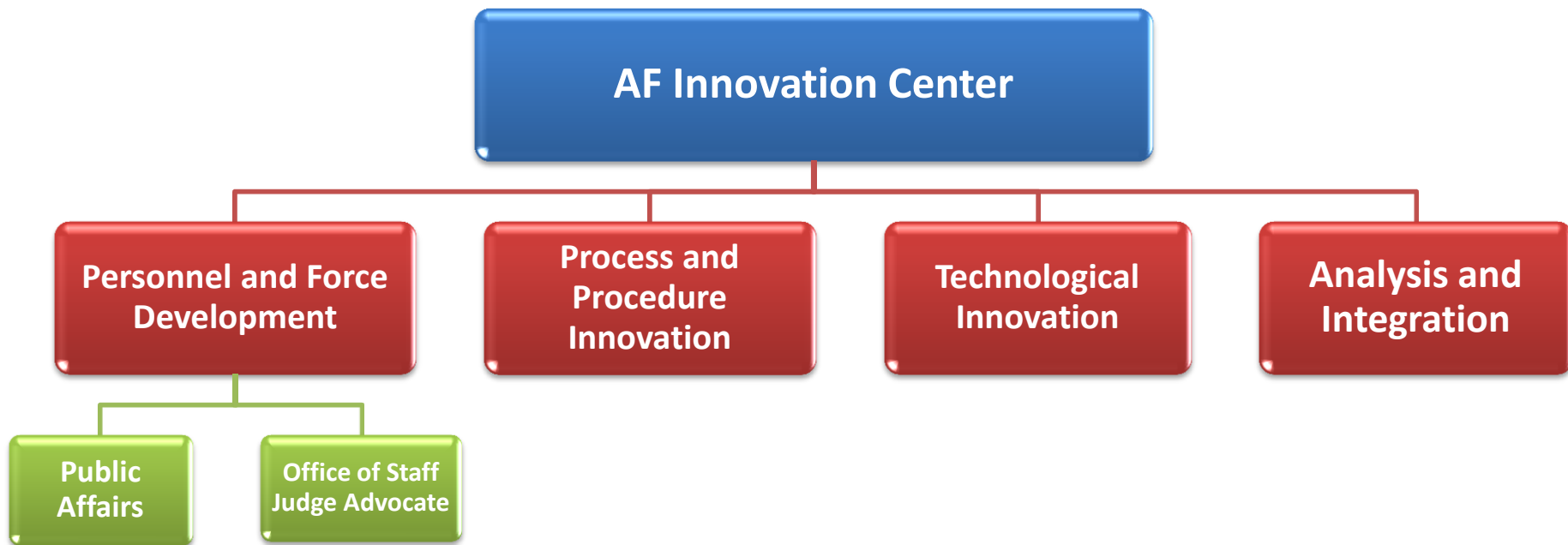
Air Force Innovation Center



- Field Operating Agency modeled after Air Force Safety Center
- Provides ‘Light Touch’ structure
 - Coordinates cross-org synchronization
 - Facilitates analysis, evaluation, and sustainment
 - Maintains Innovation Database
 - Develops Innovation Curriculum
 - Maintains ‘Flash Rewrite’ Process
 - Publicizes innovation successes



Air Force Innovation Center





Air Force Innovation Center



- Personnel and Force Development Division
 - Oversees administration and manning for AFIC and career fields
 - Administers AF-level innovation awards program
 - Builds Innovation Handbook and briefing curriculum to develop every Airman as an innovator
 - Trains Squadron Innovation Representatives on AF Innovation Database, Flash Rewrites, and how to brief curriculum (special topics at CC Calls)



Air Force Innovation Center



- Public Affairs
 - Manages innovation “wins” website
 - Publishes quarterly innovation journal
 - Publishes press releases to outside agencies
- Office of Staff Judge Advocate
 - Provides legal advice for innovation, acquisitions, and contracts, etc.



Air Force Innovation Center



- Process and Procedure Innovation Division
 - Implements non-material solutions
 - Manages “Flash Rewrite” System for expedited regulation updates
 - Enforces 60-day feedback
- Technological Innovation Division
 - Implements material solutions
 - Works with acquisitions and contracting
 - Ensures synchronization with non-material solutions



Air Force Innovation Center



- Analysis and Integration Division
 - Designs and maintain cross-organization AF Innovation Database
 - Facilitates research, evaluation, and management of best practices
 - Works closely with HAF/A9 Lessons Learned
 - Expands successful innovation pilot-programs to total force